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SUBJECT: IRAN'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: KEY INDICATORS OF FRAUD  
  
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CLASSIFIED BY: Ramin Asgard, Director, Iran Regional Presence  
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REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (S/NF) Iran analysts, both Iranian and foreign, have reacted with incredulity to the results of the Iranian presidential election and accused the IRIG of grossly rigging the election and falsifying the results. The Iran Regional Presence Office's review of Iran's recent presidential elections and the current election indicate the accusations of fraud have merit. Key points:

-- The numbers released by the Ministry of Interior - for all four of the candidates - contravene known voting patterns in Iran's recent history. Most significantly, accepting the Ministry of Interior's numbers requires believing that a massive new group of voters who did not support Ahmadinejad in 2005 voted in favor of him this time.

-- Media supportive of Ahmadinejad began indicating he had won before polls closed and before counting was to have begun. Just after 6pm in Iran, an article appeared on the Fars news website in Farsi alleging that a candidate had won the election with about 60% of the vote, nearly matching the final outcome.

-- There is strong evidence that the government had prepared extensively for the post-election riots despite that past elections have not provoked riots.

Where does Ahmadinejad's Majority Come From?

12. (S/NF) According to the Ministry of Interior (MOI), 46.2 million of Iran's 70 million people were eligible to vote in the election. Based on the numbers released publicly by the MOI on June 13, turnout exceeded 85 percent nationwide, based on 38.95 million ballots cast. This is the highest participation level recorded in a national election, topping the 80 percent turnout in the 1997 presidential election. This level of voter participation was anticipated by most Iran political analysts and supported anecdotally through widespread foreign and domestic media coverage of long lines at polling stations in

major urban centers throughout the day.

13. (S/NF) Khatami won the 1997 and 2001 elections in landslides, taking 70 percent and 78 percent, respectively. He had broad support across all demographics, but the large margins of victory were primarily due to his ability to mobilize and sweep the urban vote.

14. (S/NF) During the eight years of Khatami's administration, urban voters grew disillusioned with the political system that prevented Khatami from effectively implementing the reform movement's platform and emerged as a largely silent majority within Iran. Participation among this cadre dropped in the 2004 Majles election, the 2005 presidential election, and the 2008 Majles election. It is within this context that the relatively-unknown Ahmadinejad came to power in 2005, primarily on the back of a strong rural turnout and a significant popular backlash to his principal opponent. The 2007 Tehran City Council election provides a snapshot of Ahmadinejad's urban support, midway between the two presidential elections. Ahmadinejad's allies in the election fared poorly in the 2007 Tehran City Council election, indicating that two years into his tenure his urban support, at least in Tehran, remained low.

15. (S/NF) In the first round of the 2005 election, Ahmadinejad gained 20 percent of the vote, roughly 5.6 million people. This cohort should be considered his base of support at that time. Ahmadinejad may have expanded his base in the intervening 4 years, and likely did, but the MOI numbers require that Ahmadinejad's base roughly quadrupled. The MOI numbers show that 85 percent of the country voted and that Ahmadinejad received 63 percent of the vote, an outcome that requires Ahmadinejad to have captured a significant share of the urban

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vote and the silent majority - the exact people who stayed home in the past few elections rather than vote for Ahmadinejad or his political allies.

16. (S/NF) Ahmadinejad does enjoy a loyal, committed base of support. He has been in campaign mode since 2005 but has focused his attention and the government's resources mainly on the rural voters who brought him to office. He has also recently been able to boost the salaries of many public sector workers and pensioners. In the months leading up to the election, however, there was a growing consensus among political scientists, sociologists, and economists that despite the handouts and salary increases, Ahmadinejad's support among the poor and the working class in both urban and rural areas was eroding rather than increasing. It is well-established that attendance at Ahmadinejad public events is enhanced by cash handouts, and supporters are often bussed to events to ensure high turnout.

17. (S/NF) The election results released by the MOI contravene voting patterns in Iran's recent history. In 2005, Ahmadinejad's support in the 30 provinces ranged from a low of 6 percent to a high of 55 percent, reflecting a range of voting preferences among Iran's diverse population. In this election, Ahmadinejad's support ranged from a low of 45 percent to a high of 77 percent, and he received under 50 percent in only two provinces. Also, Karroubi gained 18 percent of the vote in 2005 and swept his home province of Lorestan. According to the MOI, this year he captured less than 1 percent of the vote nationwide and just 4 percent in Lorestan. Of the three "Azerbaijani" provinces, Mousavi lost two to Ahmadinejad and barely won a

third; historically, even minor presidential candidates with an Azerbaijani background win these provinces. It is worth noting that Mousavi lost his home province, East Azerbaijan, despite his candidacy's significant resonance amongst his fellow Azeri Iranians. Ahmadinejad won East Azerbaijan, despite having polled at only 15 percent there in 2005.

#### Government Oversight also Raises Suspicions

¶18. (S/NF) The process of counting and announcing results did not follow the government's own rules. In past elections, the government entities charged with administering and certifying results have largely observed the protocol outlined in the Election Law. The Ministry of Interior usually announces provincial and municipal results real time, as they are counted, following the close of the polls. Such results were only announced three days later in this election. Khamenei, rather than waiting for the Guardians Council to certify the election before endorsing the result, approved of the results prior to the MOI's announcement of the final results.

¶19. (S/NF) Media supportive of Ahmadinejad began indicating he had won before polls closed and before counting was to have begun. Just after 6pm in Iran, an article appeared on the Fars news website in Farsi alleging that a candidate had won the election with about 60 percent of the vote.

¶10. (S/NF) There is strong evidence that the government had prepared extensively for the post-election riots, with the pre-positioning of anti-riot units, the cuts in SMS service before the election, and the denial of communication services to reformist groups. However, past elections have not provoked riots. The riots in protest of the announcement of election results are occurring in all major cities, and across a variety of neighborhoods within the cities. Protests have not been limited to specific demographic groups.

Comment:

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¶11. (S/NF) The actual results of the election will likely never be known. However, IRPO concludes that the allegations of widespread fraud have merit.  
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